

VZCZCXRO5534

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DE RUEHMO #1318/01 0851421
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 261421Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8624
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 4673
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA 0069
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 0770
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4210
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI 1506
RUEHPF/AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH 0390
RUEHUM/AMEMBASSY ULAANBAATAR 0260
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RHEFAFM/DIRAFMIC FT DETRICK MD//MA-1//
RHMFIUU/DTRA ALEX WASHINGTON DC//CT//
RHEFSNG/HMSNG WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAHINGEN GE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 001318

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR G/AIG/KOWALSKI, CLERKIN, AND SES-O/CMS/GISVOLD
STATE ALSO FOR EUR/RUS, EB/TPP/ATP, EB/TPP/BTA, OES/STC
USDA FOR OSEC/DAN CAINE, FAS FOR OSTA/MACKE,
- WRIGHT, LEIER, ROSENBLUM; OCRA/THOMAS,
- FLEMINGS; OA/PATRICK CLERKIN
HHS FOR SAWYER, STEIGER
FAS PASS FSIS AND APHIS
SECDEF FOR OSD
VIENNA PASS APHIS/TANAKA, BRUSSELS PASS
- APHIS/FERNANDEZ
USDOC 3150/DAVID FULTON/MOLLY COSTA/ITA/CS/OIO/EUR
GENEVA PASS HEALTH ATTACHE
DEPARTMENT PASS USAID FOR GH/RCS/EE/ROSENBERG
CDC ATLANTA PASS SEPRL FOR DAVID SUAREZ

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [KSTH](#) [RS](#)

SUBJECT: RUSSIAN DEVELOPMENT AND EXERCISING OF AVIAN AND PANDEMIC
INFLUENZA RESPONSE PLANS

REFS: A. STATE 22992

- [1](#)B. 06 MOSCOW 8690 (AI Action Plan)
- [1](#)C. MOSCOW 776 (Recent Outbreaks)
- [1](#)D. MOSCOW 778 (Recent Outbreaks)
- [1](#)E. MOSCOW 843 (Recent Outbreaks)
- [1](#)F. MOSCOW 900 (Recent Outbreaks)
- [1](#)G. 06 MOSCOW 10955 (Human AI Vaccine)
- [1](#)H. 06 MOSCOW 1041 (AI Simulation Exercise)
- [1](#)I. 06 MOSCOW 12876 (G8 Infectious Diseases)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In response to Ref A request, Russia has not yet publicly released a comprehensive Avian Influenza (AI) and Pandemic Preparedness Plan. A draft national preparedness plan has been submitted to the WHO for review, but needs further refinement. In 2006, Russia did approve an action plan to spend nearly \$49 million combating the further spread of AI, with the Ministries of Agriculture and of Health and Social Development receiving the lion's share of the funds to produce and purchase vaccines and to improve laboratory capacity. Russia has held several conferences and exercises focusing on AI preparedness over the course of the last year for both Russian and CIS experts. The country has been steadily working to strengthen AI surveillance, diagnostics, and

general preparedness; to position the State Research Institute of Virology and Biotechnology (Vector) as a regional collaborating flu center; and to take a leading role among the CIS countries in preparedness, planning and response. END SUMMARY.

Full Preparedness Plan in Draft Form

¶2. (SBU) The Russian Government has not yet publicly released a comprehensive plan for pandemic preparedness. The Russian Research Institute of Influenza (RII) in St. Petersburg developed a draft plan in 2006, which it has shared with the WHO and USAID. Several regional plans have also been shared with WHO. The draft plan describes the Russian surveillance system and estimates the amount of antiviral medicines, vaccines, and hospital facilities that would be needed in the event of an epidemic. The document also discusses the development of vaccine and antiviral stockpiles, and disease surveillance and outbreak investigation but needs further refinement. Multidisciplinary training on flu preparedness and response will be carried out by the GOR with WHO assistance in the next quarter in the Russian Far East, the North Caucasus and other regions where there have been repeated outbreaks in birds.

¶3. (SBU) In August 2006, the government approved an action plan to spend \$49 million combating the further spread of AI (Ref B). The largest portion of these funds went to the Ministry of Agriculture to purchase and produce poultry vaccines, improve AI diagnostics and outfit outbreak investigation teams. The Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance also received funding to purchase equipment and protective gear for laboratories. The Agency for Health Care and the Federal Service for Consumer Rights Protection and Human Well-Being (Rospotrebnadzor) under the Ministry of Health and Social Development were given money to stockpile human vaccines, disinfectants, and antivirals, and to equip labs and

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purchase diagnostic kits. Other entities received modest funding, including the Russian Academy of Sciences to monitor and map bird migration and identify potential species carrying AI, and the Ministry of Defense to equip and improve diagnostics at the ministry's virology research center and its mobile units.

March 2007 Pandemic Preparedness Conference

¶4. (U) Russia hosted an international Influenza Conference entitled "Preparedness for an Influenza Pandemic: An International Outlook," in St. Petersburg March 15-17, at which Russian researchers presented the country's response to the most recent AI outbreaks in the Moscow region among poultry (Refs C-F). U.S. experts from the CDC and European researchers also presented analyses of recent human cases and bird outbreaks around the world. More than 100 participants attended the conference, including representatives from many of the CIS countries (Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Krygyzstan, and Tajikistan).

General Preparedness Progress in 2006

¶5. (U) In 2006, Russia became a member of the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza. The country launched a national poultry vaccination program and greatly expanded its human influenza vaccination program, targeting 22 million people (15.4 percent of the population). Russia has successfully stamped out nearly 150 outbreaks of AI (sitreps reporting on these outbreaks are posted on the embassy's classified website: www.state.gov/p/eur/moscow/). The CDC and the USDA Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory also forged closer ties in AI research with Vector. Russia began developing and conducting clinical trials on a human AI vaccine (Ref G). In February 2006, Russia's Emergency Services Ministry held a series of exercises simulating AI outbreaks, in which over 1,500 Russians participated (Ref H).

Influenza Surveillance Strengthened

¶6. (U) The Russian Government has purchased 15 real-time PCR machines and 64 fluorescent machines to perform influenza diagnostics. Some 15 more machines are being purchased with funding from the CDC for use in Russia. The Central Research Institute of Epidemiology is currently producing test kits for influenza diagnostics and is conducting lab trainings for lab specialists from all regions.

¶7. (U) Russia has two federal WHO collaborating centers: the Research Institute of Influenza (RII) in St. Petersburg and the Center of Influenza Epidemiology and Ecology at the Ivanovsky Institute of Virology in Moscow. These institutes receive weekly data on respiratory diseases incidence from a total of 54 regions of Russia and in turn provide weekly reports to Rospotrebnadzor, WHO, WHO collaborating centers, and regional labs. These centers also receive and analyze isolates from the above regions. Some 49 regions linked to the RII have a computer-based system of epidemiological surveillance, and 20 Russian labs have the capacity

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for virus isolation in cell culture. Another 40 labs can perform direct immunofluorescent assays, and many labs can identify rimantadin and oseltamavir (Tamiflu) resistance.

¶8. (U) A USAID/WHO program reached another 18 labs which have been added to the influenza surveillance network, bringing the total number to 72. Curriculum and training materials on molecular diagnostics of H5N1 and recommendations for establishing and maintaining the laboratory network have been developed with support from WHO through a USAID grant. Proficiency testing and validation of locally produced H5 diagnostic tests have been successfully completed in collaboration with WHO.

Russia's Leading AI Preparedness Role within the CIS -----

¶9. (U) At the St. Petersburg G8 Summit last July, the G8 leaders supported Russia's taking a leading role within the CIS on pandemic preparedness. Russia is spending \$45 million to establish Vector as a regional collaborating center for AI and to equip a network of 26 other labs. Vector has also begun the process of establishing itself as a WHO collaborating center for influenza (Ref I). Four leading Russian influenza experts visited the WHO collaborating Center at CDC Atlanta in January 2007, and will soon visit a similar center in the UK.

¶10. (U) Russia hosted a two-day CIS Conference on Joint AI Prevention in November 2006 in Novosibirsk. All CIS countries except Georgia participated. At the meeting, the CIS countries adopted a joint action plan on pandemic preparedness for 2006-2009. They also endorsed establishing Vector as a WHO influenza collaborating center, noting that it would increase efficiency and reduce the cost of anti-epidemic activities. (The complete text of the conference resolution is available in English through Open Source as document CEP20061219346001, and is available in Russian on the Rospotrebnadzor website: www.rospotrebnadzor.ru.)

BURNS